

Abstract 675

TITLE: Facilitating the Client's "Next Step" in HIV/STD Risk Reduction

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ISSUE: Although models and theories of behavior change suggest that adoption of risk reduction behaviors is an incremental, step-by-step process over a significant time span, HIV providers often feel frustrated by expectations for achieving drastic changes in "HIV prevention" behavior during extremely brief counseling sessions.

SETTING: Clinical, behavioral, and partner management training conducted by the California STD/HIV Prevention Training Center (CA PTC) with training participants who conduct HIV/STD behavioral counseling or other interventions.

PROJECT: Health Educators at the CA PTC are in a unique position as "translators" of behavioral science theories and models into public health practice (i.e., technology *exchange*). Through a never-ending process of training development, delivery, evaluation, and modification, we have explored a plethora of methods and approaches for training participants on how best to facilitate client-generated HIV/STD risk reduction steps. Drawing on several theories, and training methods borrowed from various trainers and training courses, we have developed a highly experiential training session designed to prepare participants to conduct a simple and brief "next step" protocol for HIV/STD risk reduction counseling.

RESULTS: We developed a relatively short (under 2 hours), theory-based, highly experiential training session for counselors and educators which helps participants to (1) accept the incremental reality of the behavior change process; (2) "reframe" expectations of themselves and their clients; and (3) facilitate client-generated options for risk reduction in a short period of time.

LESSONS LEARNED: Under the typical time constraints for risk reduction counseling, two conditions are essential for success: (1) A more reasonable expectation of what can be accomplished by a skilled counselor in fifteen minutes or less; and (2) a simple and explicit counseling protocol, consistent with behavior change theory. Using this client-centered protocol, a provider can facilitate the client's next reasonable and achievable step in HIV/STD risk reduction during a brief counseling session.

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